

A BILLY DOUX.

THOSE who enjoy a good hearty laugh, several of 'em in fact, and a play that will thoroughly amuse and interest them for two quickly fleeting hours, let them go to the Criterion Theatre and see H. V. ESMOND'S *Billy's Little Love Affair*, a genuine light comedy in three crisp, sparkling Acts. Capitally played all round; we won't grudge a superlative to any one of the company, from the waiting-maids, carefully rendered by Miss EILEEN WARREN and Miss EDITH CARTWRIGHT, up to the heroine, *Wilhelmina Marr*, alias "*Billy*," of whom Miss EVA MOORE makes the most delightful person, and with whom we all fall in love straight away; and on the inferior, or male, side, from the footman, Mr. J. ABBOTT, ascending per *Jenkins*, a valet, and *Ford*, a butler, ably impersonated by Mr. HORTON COOPER, up to the *Jack Frere* of Mr. ALLAN AYNESWORTH, a character to which he gives all the essential vivacity, while here and there imparting that touch of pathos or of severity, that just preserves the true balance of comedy.

Mr. SAM SOTHERN'S silly, honest *Jim Greaves* is excellent; while for the cautious, middle-aged *Sir Harry Harmon*, true friend and experienced bachelor, no better representative could be found than that thorough artist Mr. CHARLES GROVES.

As the hearty but vulgar American millionairess, wife of *Jim Greaves*, Miss FLORENCE ST. JOHN is at her very best in a thoroughly low-comedy part; while from Miss GRANVILLE, as "the villain of the piece," we get that essential shade that this very bright comedy artistically demands. As *Hagson* the discreet servant who looks a scoundrel (of the *Littimer* order in *David Copperfield*), but is an honest man, showing uncommonly proper pride in refusing any pecuniary reward for his virtue, Mr. MACLAREN is impressively good. There are, of course, some faults, and the repetition of a catch phrase has a tendency to become tiresome, but on the whole, we should doubt if there be a more amusing "light comedy" than this in London at this present time, be the other where it may. So, "*advice gratis*," don't fail to see it.

THE THEATRICAL "PAR" OF THE FUTURE.

["When the curtain went down on *Claudian* at the Grand Theatre (Leeds), Mr. WILSON BARRETT, in response to cries for a speech, suggested that he should talk about the Fiscal Question . . . and for several minutes the resuscitated Byzantine nobleman, in all the dignity of a toga, talked about the Colonies being one family, &c., &c."—*Yorkshire Post*.]

A GREAT many interesting speeches—in addition, of course, to those set down for them—have been delivered by



Lady. "HAVE YOU LOST YOURSELF, LITTLE BOY?"

Little Boy. "No—BOO-HOO—I'VE FOUND A STREET I DON'T KNOW!"

prominent actors during the week. The remarks of Mr. WILLIAMS, however, on Alien Immigration, at the conclusion of The Real Cake-Walk at the Shaftesbury, and those of *King Richard the Second* on Passive Resistance, though entitled to respect, are considered to arise a little too obviously out of the situation of the respective speakers, and to be hardly sufficiently surprising and gratuitous. A much more palpable hit was made the other night by the popular exponent of *Monsieur Beaucaire*, who, upon being deservedly recalled into the Pump Room at Bath, said he should like to give the audience his views on the Motor Problem. The incongruity of the eighteenth-century entourage of the orator was in harmony with the best (recent) practice of the leaders of the profession, and created quite a sensation.

But even this was eclipsed on Saturday by Miss LOUIE FREEAR'S unexpected substitution of a serious little lecture on Home Defence for her usual encore verses. An elderly gentleman in the audience, who said he had not been inside a theatre for years, created some disturbance by demanding his money back. He raised the amazing contention that at the play he ought to be allowed to forget the questions that tortured him elsewhere. As far as could be made out from his incoherent ravings, the name of this eccentric person was SUTOR CREPIDAM—syllables similar to which, with an accent on the last, he was constantly repeating.

Something like an Appetite.

WANTED, Daimler or other good motor, also reversing gear, suitable for lunch. Address &c.—From the "*Motor Cycle*."

THE SUN-CHILD.

(Continued.)

Now in the course of his wanderings the Sun-child one day came to a dark and smoky town. I must tell you here that I cannot fix the date with any accuracy, for the Sun-child kept no diary. Indeed, as he was to live for ever it did not matter to him whether a day came in one month or year or in another. These things could not trouble him, only he remembered—this was long, long afterwards when he had returned to his home, as you shall learn in good time, and when all the old happy sights and sounds from which he was parted for a space had come about him once again—he remembered, I say, what he had seen and heard during the days he had spent below, and he told the tale of them with perfect truth and simplicity. How I came to hear about it all I shall not say at present.

Well, he came to a dark and smoky town. He had never thought it possible there could be so much smoke in the world. It poured out from the tall slender chimneys in thick black rolls and spread about in the air and over the town like a cloak. And all day there was the whirr of machinery, and hammers clanged and furnaces glowed with a white fire. And the men had stern and grimy faces, and the women were peaked and pale and anxious looking, and the children who played about the pavement or trudged to work or school were thin and wizened and stunted.

There were rows and rows of houses all precisely alike, all of them built solidly enough, but none of them having, on the outside at least, any distinctive character of its own. Into one of these the Sun-child stepped—why, he knew not, but his fancy moved him and he went in. It was half-past six o'clock in the evening and the sun had not yet set but was hanging low down near the tops of the houses, a huge, smoky, orange-coloured circle of dim light.

The front room was empty. It was a tidy room, almost painfully tidy, for it was kept for Sunday afternoons and other occasions of state, and it looked as if no human being ever had or ever would set foot in it. The chairs had worsted covers, and they were ranged at fixed intervals against the walls and at the table which stood in the centre of the room. On the table were four books symmetrically arranged. On the mantelpiece stood a clock and two china monsters, and two vases containing paper flowers. On a bracket fixed to the opposite wall was an elaborate arrangement of wax flowers under a glass cover, and in the fire-place was a cheap paper grate-screen of red, white and blue flounces. The clock ticked merrily enough, but everything else was silent and trim and rigidly immovable to the point of affliction.

The back room, however, which was kitchen and sitting-room in one, showed a different scene. There was plenty of life there, for there were in it a pale busy woman and six children, ranging in age from a baby in a cot to a little girl of ten, who was trying to help her mother.

"I don't know where your father can be," the woman was saying; "doing no good, I'll be bound. Of course he must get into trouble just now, and the rent not paid, and me working my fingers to the bone all day. What's to become of us I don't know. MARY, whatever are you standing there for, looking at me and doing nothing? Bustle along or you'll have to get the strap. Lor' bless me, whatever are children made for—and them that wants 'em least gets the most. Here, you TOMMY, give over pulling BILLY's hair, won't you, or I'll dust both of your jackets."

All this time she was hurrying about the room, moving plates and dishes, dabbing here and wiping there, attending to the kettle, delivering an occasional slap to one of the children, and never ceasing from the flow of her loud talk. This woman had once been pretty and amiable, but time and

anxieties and the care of many children had faded her beauty and taken sweetness out of her temper. And now her man was in trouble at the works, and her poor subsistence, she feared, was to be taken from her, and she, with her brood and her unhappy husband, was to be turned adrift in the world.

But while she still raved and bustled a step was heard, the door opened, and a big man, his hands and face covered with oily grime, came into the room heavily. Little MARY ran to him and he took her in his arms and kissed her.

"Ah, you're here at last," said his wife; "why can't you leave the child alone, dirtying her face so? What have you got to say for yourself? All's over, I suppose, and we've got to be moving. Why did I ever marry such a——"

"Take care, Mother," said the man; "you don't know what you're saying."

"Ah, but I do, and you'll have to hear me whether you like it or not."

"You can talk when I've finished," he said, sitting down and taking MARY on his knee. "Now what would you say if——" he stopped and looked at his wife.

"If what? Be quick with it. I've got my work to do and can't stand listening all day. Out with it."

"Only this," said her man, smiling and placing his hand on MARY's golden head, "only this. The trouble's over. It didn't take long to settle that; and DICK BLATCHFORD's going to Sheffield, and I'm——" he paused again.

"Oh Tom, speak," said his wife with a gasp.

"I'm to be foreman in his place, that's all."

"Tom!" said the woman.

"It's gospel," said the man.

With that the woman sat down, and her tears began to flow and she upbraided herself bitterly, and, going to her man, she fell on her knees beside him.

"Never mind, POLLY, old girl," said he, "you shall have a new dress. And look here, boys and girls, we'll take your mother to the circus to-night."

At this the Sun-child went softly out, for he felt that his work was done.

(To be continued.)

TO OLD TOM.

(On his resignation of the post of Green-keeper to the Royal and Ancient Golf Club.)

ROYAL and ancient friend, whose honoured name
Is dear to all who love the ancient game,
Though others keep the green (ay, there's the rub!)
Which you so long have tended for the Club,—
Tom, of the lion heart and gentle mien,
Your memory we'll keep for ever green.

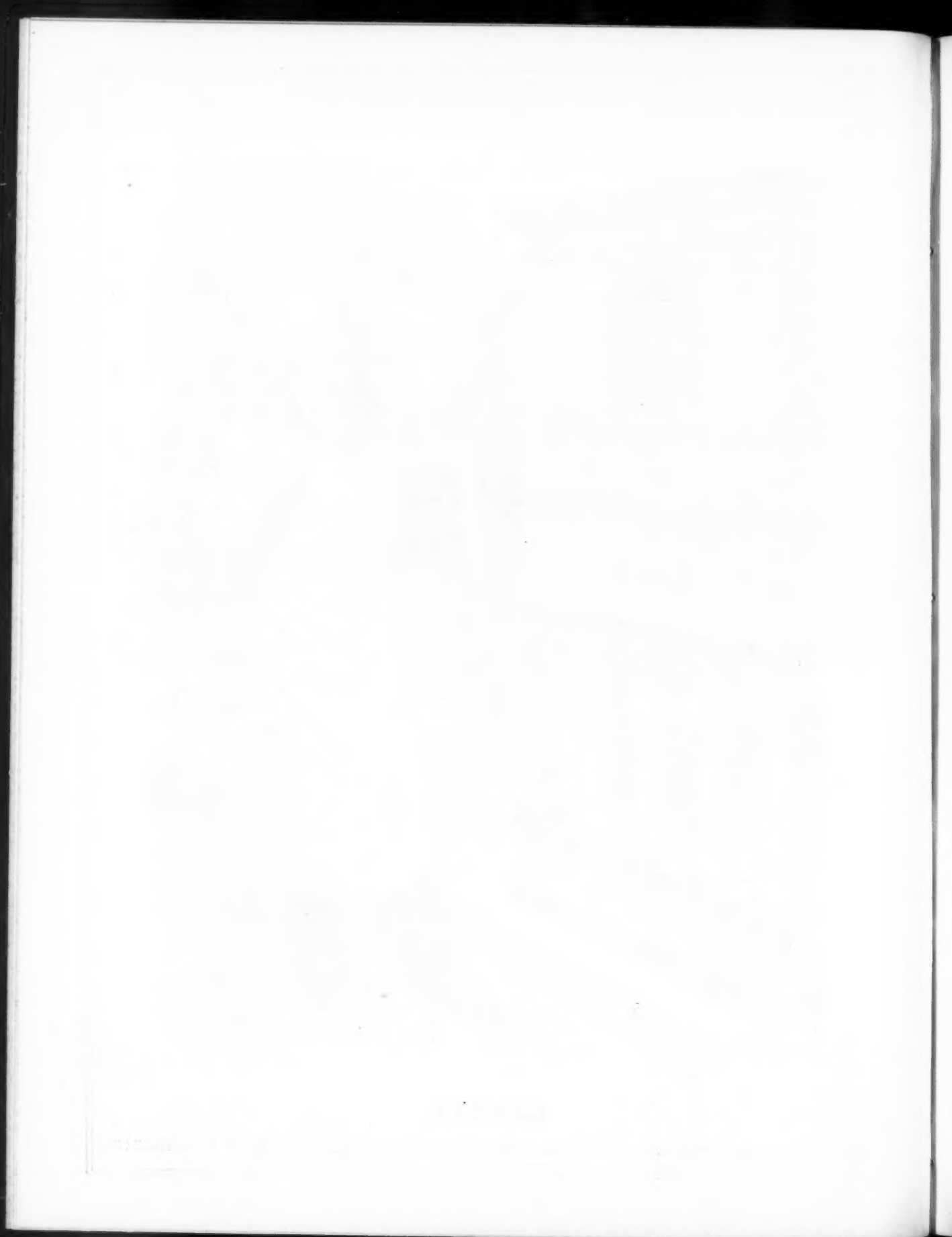
Well have you borne your four-score years and two,
Faithful in service, as in friendship true;
Now, pacing slowly homewards from the Turn,
Long may it be before you cross the Burn.
And ere you tread your well-loved links no more,
May eighty-two (plus twenty) be your score.

MR. GEORGE GROSSMITH used to sing a capital song called "The Duke of Seven Dials." Is it possible that this worthy was any relation of the "DUC DE NEVERS," alias C. J. FRANÇOIS, who last week was sent for eighteen months to prison for having obtained a motor-car by false pretences? This new specimen of an "unfortunate nobleman" will have leisure to reflect on the truth of the proverb, "Nevers too late to mend." At all events it is to be hoped he will not in future give any police magistrate the opportunity of exclaiming "Nevers again!"



RICKETY.

B-L-F-R (Cabinet-maker). "THERE! IT LOOKS LOVELY!—I ONLY HOPE IT 'LL HOLD TOGETHER!"





Doctor. "WELL, MRS. O'BRIEN, I HOPE YOUR HUSBAND HAS TAKEN HIS MEDICINE REGULARLY, EH?"

Mrs. O'Brien. "SURE, THEN, DOCTOR, I'VE BEEN SORELY PUZZLED. THE LABEL SAYS, 'ONE PILL TO BE TAKEN THREE TIMES A DAY,' AND FOR THE LIFE OF ME I DON'T SEE HOW IT CAN BE TAKEN MORE THAN ONCE!"

THE TOWN DAY BY DAY.

(With acknowledgments to the "Daily Mail.")

II.

October 8.—To-day we may confidently look out at the chief termini for returning migrants. Cabs loaded with luggage are common objects in the streets, as train after train deposits its load of Londoners once again seeking their winter quarters. Note how bronzed some of them are. The colour, however, will not long endure under the blighting influence of fog and mist and the city's sunlessness. Violets are reappearing in the streets once more—not, alas, the purple blossoms of March, the harbingers of spring, but the autumn anachronisms that rain regrets and naught can serve to allay that sweet sorrow. The ordinary bunch costs a penny (two halfpennies would be considered legal tender, but probably not four farthings); the larger bunches are tuppence.

Oct. 9.—In Bloomsbury may now be seen, even by the most casual observer,

our dark but punctual visitors from India's coral strand on their way to the shady groves of the Temple. For powerful is the fascination exerted by the law over our dusky feudatories, and powerful also is the attraction of the Russell Square neighbourhood, sweetly named the bury of the bloom, upon these little brown figures. Strange variegated life of the London streets, what pen can do thee justice?

Oct. 10.—The firm flesh of the salmon no longer touches the fishmonger's window with a gracious roseate tinge; but the coarse ruddiness of the lobster still challenges the gaze amid a cool white environment of halibut and hake. Blue-aproned the fishmonger stands, a triton among the minnows, guaranteeing freshness to all his store, even in the face of nasal testimony. Note how the homing clerk emerges, rush-basket in hand, and runs with short swift steps to his train. Nature has few phenomena more persistent than this.

Oct. 11.—To-day if it is fine many new and gay costumes will be visible

in the Parks. Winter is upon us, it is true, yet reluctant are the paraders to abandon the pretence of summer's heyday. Summer do I say? But what summer have we had? Though the hedge-sparrow has begun to sing again, migrant rooks and jackdaws overhead are noisy of the north and its chill presage, and the wild geese are here;—is it because Nature abhors a vacuum and would fill the gaps caused by the ravages of the Michaelmas appetites?

Oct. 12.—Soon now will the Lord Mayor doff his gaudy plumage and return to his old larva state, making room for his successor. For this is ever Nature's way; rhythmical is she as the tides. The new is ever giving place to the old. There are already signs of the great change, but the complete transformation is not to be expected until November 9, according to the best naturalists. Meanwhile, turtles are becoming restless, and aldermen return daily from Homburg, Ems and Aix, where they have been gathering strength.

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

Love and Lovers of the Past (CHATTO AND WINDUS) is a book of modest pretensions. The material is frankly extracted from the National Record Office at Paris. It is, nevertheless, a valuable contribution to the inner history of the French Revolution. When the apostles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity dragged man or woman to the guillotine and there made short work of them, their emissaries had a habit of pouncing down on the domicile of the doomed and taking possession of their private papers. Stored in the Record Office, M. PAUL GAULOT comes upon them a century later and edits a selection. Written with the freedom of lovers little dreaming of a prying Twentieth Century thumbing the faded leaves, my Baronite finds in them the special charm of the immortal work of PEPYS. Sad to say, they do not display anything more icy than the morality observed by our old friend at the Admiralty. The story of the Duchesse DE BERRY, and the state of things it discloses at the Court of LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH, justified the Revolution which followed in due time. Asmodeus-like, M. GAULOT conducts the reader over Paris under Bourbon rule and revolutionary terror. Unroofing the houses, he shows us how people lived and loved and died in those good old times.

An awful storm at sea during which the phantom ship was first sighted, the details of the bustle on board, the brief energetic conversations between the officers and the captain, and the working of the vessel, are all most powerfully described by Mr. J. C. HUTCHESON in his exciting and nervously written story entitled *The Ghost Ship, a Mystery of the Sea* (WARD AND LOCK). Through over a hundred pages and in the midst of all the stirring events that are necessarily crowded into a short space of time, the individuality of every character is admirably preserved. The boarding of the pirate vessel, the hand-to-hand "free fight," the slaughter and the triumph of right, with might on its side, are all so well told that the Baron does not recall anything better, in this particular line, since the *Toilers of the Sea*, or one of Mr. LOUIS STEVENSON'S earlier works, say *Treasure Island*.

My Nautical Retainer writes: Even when he is not, in the person of Toby M.P., distilling that Essence of Parliament whose purpose is primarily to amuse and only incidentally to instruct, it is astonishing what freshness and buoyancy of mood Mr. LUCY brings to the making of his political sketches. Other men—though they must be very few indeed—may share his intimate knowledge of the last thirty years of Parliamentary history; but with this knowledge to unite his sure instinct for the seizing of characteristics, his certainty of touch in the realising of impressions, and, withal, his easy gaiety, too resourceful to weary, and too gentle to wound—these are charms of which Mr. LUCY holds the lonely secret.

In *Peeps at Parliament* (NEWNES) he opens with a chapter on his own early associations with the Press Gallery, and then plunges into the midst of the GLADSTONE-ROSEBERY Administration; but though, for some reason not disclosed, he pretends to confine himself to the years 1893 to 1895, he always diverges with charming garrulity into just any reminiscence that occurs to him. The book, in fact, is a collection of random notes drawn from incident or personality, and to these literary sketches, always vivid and suggestive, Mr. GOULD'S delightful pen-and-ink drawings form the exact complement that only another art could supply. May one dare to add that in this generous gallery of portraits we enjoy a certain relief from the reiterated caricatures of that particular figure which of recent times has become an obsession with "F. C. G.?" A little fault

that I have to find with the book is that there is no author's note setting forth the reason for its apparently arbitrary limits; nor so much as a hint that it is only an instalment (as I sincerely hope) of a long series of similar volumes from the same felicitous pen.

A Metamorphosis (METHUEN) is a rattling good story, of the kind for which a busy man is thankful on a long railway journey, or over a post-prandial cigar. In its vitality, its resources of invention, its trick of starting afresh when writers less imaginative than Mr. RICHARD MARSH would be played out, it reminds my Baronite of the immortal *Monte Cristo*. It is obvious that *George Otway*, the millionaire who changes clothes and identity with a murderer who commits suicide by jumping off Southwark Bridge, might any day have put matters right by calling on his banker or his solicitor. If he had done so, we should not have had this story, palpitating with interest on every page. So, if Mr. OTWAY doesn't mind, and he doesn't seem to, we are glad he never thought of so simple a procedure.

The two initialled (E. V. L. and C. L. G.) but otherwise anonymous authors of *Wisdom While You Wait* have performed a feat which their previous achievement seemed to render impossible: they have surpassed themselves. For rollicking fun with a spice of devilry to flavour it my Assistant Reader can remember nothing that quite equals *England Day by Day: A Guide to Efficiency and Prophetic Calendar for 1904* (METHUEN). The advertisements (admirably illustrated, by the way, by GEORGE MORROW) are almost a sufficient treat by themselves, and the matter of the book is as good or better. THE BARON DE BOOK-WORMS.

"THE UNTILLED FIELD."

["M. JACQUES LERBAUDY, the 'Emperor of the Sahara,' is now in London, and busy buying implements of war and husbandry." *Daily Paper.*]

O, I WOULD be an Emperor upon a golden throne;

I would wear a gay tiara
With the rarest gems of Para,
And I'd rule the wide Sahara

On my own.

I'd sit in my oasis where the palm trees' shade is sweet,
With all the Courts of Europe paying homage at my feet,
And every day from ten to four the heralds should repeat,
"Vive l'Empereur! Vive Jacques of the Sahara!"

Across the trackless desert on my camel I would bump,

And although it might be rougher
Than is pleasant for a buffer,
Still my soul should never suffer

From the hump;

But my heart would leap within me with the wildest of
delights

As I beheld to rear of me my train of dusky wights,
O, how I'd joy to tell my tale of true Arabian knights—
The true Arabian knights of the Sahara!

My people I would educate in useful kinds of lore,
For in culture they are narrow
As a vegetable marrow,
So I'd send them off to harrow

By the score;

And all the new machinery for cultivating land
I'd ship across to Africa, and wouldn't it be grand
When all my loving subjects had been taught to plough
the sand,
The never-ending sand of the Sahara!

PRIMITIVE PUNSTERS.

["Mr. AUBERON HERBERT deduces from his collection of carved flints the fact that the men of the Stone Age possessed a keen sense of humour."—*Evening Paper*.]

WHEN life was strenuous and young,
The chase found man a raw beginner;
A hundred futile flints he flung
Before he could procure a dinner;
Each year the mammoth warier grew,
The bison more expert at running—
Which makes it strange, to me and you,
That man could spare the time for punning!

But, though his days were full of dread,
No idle fretter he nor fumer;
He'd often leave his arrow-head
To fashion little shafts of humour;
So in his crudely playful way
He brightened up his sombre cavern,
Just as the funny man to-day
Will scintillate in club or tavern!

Gay youth began with jest and jibe,
And all the jokes it knew it crack'd,
till

By some JOE MILLER of the tribe
The Chasing of the Pterodactyl
Was told anew. This always "took,"
And men's and maiden's blende
laughter

Resounded through the cave, and shook
The stalactite, which served for rafter!

Anon, the merriment waxed hot
Around the skin-clad dandy's raiment,
And Paleolithic punsters got
What they deserved, a stone for pay-
ment;

A jolly dog was early man
(We trust to geologic rumour),
Until the New Stone Age began
And quenched his gladness with—
New Humour!

FROM AN EARNEST INQUIRER.

SIR,—I admit myself an ignoramus and should be indignant were anyone to apply to me the term that BORACHIO used to *Master Constable Dogberry*. Yet when I read of an exalted Reverend personage honoured as "Dean of the Order of the Thistle," I cannot refrain from inquiring if this distinction ought not to be conferred *only* on the Vicar of Bray? Yours, H. E. HAW.

Overheard at Chamonix.

Stout British Matron (in a broad British accent, to a slim diligence driver). Êtes-vous la diligence?

Driver. Non, Madame, mais j'en suis le cocher.

Matron (with conviction). C'est la même chose; gardez pour moi trois places dans votre intérieur demain.



BLOWING THEIR OWN TRUMPET.

"SOMETHING FOR A PRESENT, NOT TOO EXPENSIVE? YES, MADAM. THESE PHONOGRAPHS ARE VERY POPULAR."

"BUT ARE THEY GOOD?"

"I'VE SOLD A GREAT MANY, AND HAD NO COMPLAINTS. I NEED HARDLY SAY MORE, MADAM. THEY SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES!"

THE NUMERAL SERIES.

Mr. *Punch* has been investigating the question of literary successes, and he has arrived at the surprisingly novel conclusion that much depends on the name of the book. He believes, for instance, that Mr. KIPLING owes much of his fame to his habit of including a numeral in the titles of his volumes. Having the welfare of authors and publishers at heart, Mr. *Punch* selects the following titles from his Christmas announcement list, as an aid to finding suitable names:

The Two Too Solid Flesh: a Vegetarian Romance. By G. BERNARD SHAW.

The Three Bridges. By the Inventor of Ping-Pong.

The Four Corners. By J. PIERPONT MORGAN.

The Seven Dials. By BIG BEN.

The Nine Helms. By W. W. JACOBS.

The Hundred Best Cooks. By Lieut.-Col. NEWNHAM DAVIS.

The Three Hundred and Sixty-five Days. By ZADKIEL.

The Thousand and One Knights. By DEBRETT.

THE PATH TO GLORY.

[Mr. J. B. BADDELEY, in a letter to the *Standard*, observes, "My housemaid has done Scawfell Pike."]

VARIED indeed are the modes by which
Mortals endeavour themselves to raise
Out of obscurity's darksome ditch
Into publicity's grateful blaze.
BROWN with a hyphen adorns his name,
JONES drives a tandem along Pall Mall;
I've a more durable title to fame;
I have a housemaid who climbed
Scawfell.

Some are renowned for their strong
cigars,

Some for the excellence of their cooks;
Some for the speed of their motor-cars,
Some for their wives' or their daughters'
looks.

Some are exalted by skill at a game,
Some by the oil that exudes from a
well;

I've a more durable title to fame;
I have a housemaid who climbed
Scawfell.

What do I care if my uncle Dick
Boasts of his priceless apostle spoons?
What if my nephew with spade and pick
Digs up the dollars interred by
NEWNES?

Scorning achievements so dull and tame
I have a record that none can excel;

I've a more durable title to fame;
I have a housemaid who climbed
Scawfell.

Honours I covet not, rank I scorn;
Personal paragraphs I disdain;
Envy of those in the purple born
Never has caused me a moment's pain.
Heroes, whom mafficking mobs acclaim,
Suffer eclipse when their craniums
swell;

I've a more durable title to fame;
I have a housemaid who climbed
Scawfell!

CHARIVARIA.

THE British Ambassador has informed the Porte that the Austro-Russian scheme of reform is the minimum, and that Turkey must be prompt in carrying it out. The Porte is said to have replied expressing its willingness to adopt the maximum, provided the condition as to promptness is waived.

Statistics prove that centenarians are increasing in numbers. This is supposed to be due to a determined attempt to avoid the heavy death duties.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Berkshire has publicly awarded a prize to a boy for killing 251 wasps. The report that the youth is now suffering from swelled head will surprise no one.

To celebrate the 21st birthday of a Southend gentleman, one of our half-penny papers tells us, there have been rejoicings on the line of "21 of everything." At 21 minutes past nine, 21 rockets went up to summon to the house 21 people of the age of 21. The guests sat down to 21 dishes, and the young gentleman's father presented him with £21. There were 21 dances, and 21 songs, and 21 kisses. The party lasted 21 times 21 minutes. But 21 papers could not be found to print this momentous intelligence.

Universal relief will be felt at the announcement that Ensign HUESNER, who killed a German private soldier, has declared himself satisfied with his sentence of 2 years and 7 days imprisonment, and says that he will make no further appeal. *Noblesse oblige.*

At a time when so much that is ill-natured is urged against Russia, it is pleasing to be able to report an act of kindness on the part of that Power. The Armenian clergy themselves having managed their lands in a most unbusiness-like manner, the State has now offered to look after them. The Armenian clergy do not know how to express their gratitude.

Over four hundred persons were killed by accidents caused by horse-drawn vehicles during the past twelve months, and it is under consideration whether a measure shall not be passed rendering it imperative for every such conveyance to be preceded by a man with a red flag—an innovation, by the by, which would add immensely to the gaiety of our streets.

No one will be sorry to hear that the four-wheeled cab is doomed to extinction. The Commissioner of Police has decided that all streets are to be open to cabs provided the horses trot.

We would direct the attention of our young officers to a new series of books published by Messrs. DEAN & Co., entitled "Rag Books for Children."

If ever a book was aptly named it is "Called Back." This novel is, according to advertisement, now to do work as a serial in the "London Reader."

M. LEBAUDY, the Emperor of Sahara, during his recent stay in London, was much annoyed by the importunities of enterprising tradesmen. He was especially incensed by one who wasted his time by showing him a model of a collapsible house.

There is apparently no limit to the enterprise of our newspapers. The *Daily Mail* now proposes to save Great Britain the expense of a General Election by itself canvassing the inhabitants. It is said that Mr. BALFOUR would consent to be bound by a decision arrived at in this manner, but there is some doubt as to the attitude of Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, and the Editor of the *Daily Express*.

FEARFUL WILDFOWL.

["The Custom House officers of Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.A., unable to find live snails on their classified lists, entered a painful of them under the head of 'wild animals.'"]—*Westminster Gazette*.

HUMBLE mollusc on the wall,
Wont, disdaining vulgar speed,
Very leisurely to crawl,
Are you wild indeed?

Are you proud and passionate?
Do you when you have to bear
Whips and scorns from adverse fate,
Murmur and despair?

Do you long in vain to rise
Upward to forbidden heights,
Envy the bees or flies
In their airy flights?

Would that we might hear the tale
That your jealous shells conceal!
Could some mute inglorious snail
Tell us all you feel!

Haply in a future age
Epic poets shall rehearse
Stories of the slug's fierce rage
Or the wrinkle's curse.

A "Conscientious Objector."

Tutor at Theological College (finishing his instructions to youthful student). And before your ordination, subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles is absolutely essential. I may take it for granted that you are prepared to subscribe?

Brilliant Student (hesitatingly). Oh yes, Sir, certainly. Only—I was going to ask—is the subscription *extra*, or is it included in the usual fees?

"THE stock of BARABRAS," to quote *Shylock*, who knew all that could be known as to the "markets" in Venice, seems to be pretty well in evidence just now in the Hungarian Chamber. It is noteworthy that this modern Radical representative of the ancient BARABRAS apologetised for, or at least explained away, his recent outburst against the Hungarian Monarch.

PROPER PLACE FOR A FEMALE PRISON.—
Dungeness.

MR. PUNCH'S SPECTRAL ANALYSES.**VII.—A JOKE AND A SEQUEL.**

THE Headless Man seemed pained at the very suggestion. "No," he said. "No. It was not I who placed the wet sponge on top of your door. I should scorn such an action."

"My dear Sir," I stammered, hastening to make amends, "I trust you will forgive—unjust suspicions—cumulative mass of circumstantial ev—"

"Say no more, say no more. The episode is forgotten, forgotten. Not," he added with a snigger, "but what we do play practical jokes at the Back of Beyond. You know what GILBERT says of us, 'We spectres are a jollier crew than you perhaps suppose.' Shrewd man, GILBERT. Puts the matter in a nutshell. But we don't annoy human beings. We confine our pleasantries to our fellow spectres. I remember—"

"Yes?"

"Oh, only a curious little story. If you're sure it wouldn't bore you? Very well, then. A young fellow came over one autumn; he was evidently as unsophisticated and innocent as he could possibly be. Guileless, if you understand me. And some of the frivolous set determined to see if they could not take him in somehow. They thought and thought, and at last their victim himself suggested an idea to them. He was always talking of his ambitions, and how he hoped, if he stuck to his work, to be given a responsible post some day as haunter somewhere, so the conspirators hit on the notion of sending him a fictitious appointment. As their ringleader put it rather neatly, 'He wants a bogey's appointment. We will give him a bogus one.' So they got hold of a ghost who had been a forger in his lifetime, and drew up what looked like an official document, appointing No. 428351 Avenue (that was the young fellow's number) to a certain house in the East End of London. No. 428351 felt that this was not quite what he had hoped for—he wanted a castle or an Elizabethan manor house—but he accepted the commission, and left to go into residence. How the conspirators chuckled! The place they had sent him to haunt was a waxworks show! And whenever they thought of him plodding patiently away at the inanimate figures, and pictured his growing surprise and dismay at their unresponsiveness, they roared and fell over one another with laughter.

"Well, No. 428351 toiled along, until one day he discovered everything, and realised how he had been taken in. But he was too proud to go back and be laughed at. He stayed on amongst the waxworks, and at last he attracted the attention of the proprietor, who forth-



John P. Hogenheimer (the celebrated pork-packer, U.S.A., who has taken a shooting on "this side"). "SAY, KEEPER, I GUESS WE'LL SHOOT THESE COVERS TO-MORROW."

Keeper. "IT WON'T DO, SIR. THERE'S TOO MUCH LEAF ABOUT YET."

J. P. H. "HAVE 'EM SWEEPED UP, THEN. SPARE NO EXPENSE!"

with advertised him all over London, so that crowds flocked to see him. Now, mark the conclusion. Among the crowds was a certain millionaire who had recently built a great house in the country. All that it needed to make it complete was a ghost, and how to get one had long been a puzzle to him. He had thought of murdering a friend in the best spare bedroom, but had felt that the friend might after all not stay to haunt, in which case all his trouble and the consequent unpleasantness would have been for nothing. When he heard of No. 428351 Avenue he was overjoyed.

The very limitations of the young fellow were in his favour. He did not want a ghost that would scare his guests. One who could only groan and rattle chains would be just the thing. The negotiations were speedily carried through. No. 428351 signed the agreement, and is now the proud haunter of one of the very finest houses in England.

"And so," concluded the Headless Man unctuously, shifting his head from his right hand to his left, and preparing to vanish through the floor, "we see that Virtue triumphs over all obstacles. Indeed, yes."



THE POET GOETH GUNNING.

HOT WORK.

"HARE UP!"

THE NEW EULOGY.

In a publisher's list *Mr. Punch* notes this strong recommendation of a novel by a popular author, culled from a weekly contemporary:—"The book is vigorous, better written, and less tedious than its forerunner, *Lorna Doone*." In the interests of both author and publisher some such telling sentence should be found in all well-meaning reviews. *Mr. Punch* has much pleasure in offering a few formulæ of moderate eulogy which he is sure will be useful.

.... This play has the excellences of *Hamlet* without any of its defects. In its portrayal of harassed human nature struggling in the meshes of the net of circumstance it is far more vivid and convincing than the earlier effort....

.... Those who have been accustomed to regard Gibbon's *Roman Empire* as a work showing some industry and talent will be compelled to reconsider their attitude on making the acquaintance of this monument of historical research. Though, after the newer plan of historians, it only covers a period of two years....

.... *Paradise Lost* certainly showed some feeling for religion, but in comparison with this new poem it pales almost to agnosticism, while from the point of view of the student of epic the *Odyssey* is by its side but a children's jingle of verse....

.... As a tale of adventure *The Three Musketeers* bears to this engrossing story much the same relation that the wooden sword of infancy bears to the cavalry sabre dripping with the blood of....

.... This stern new pessimist makes the trifles of SCHOPENHAUER and JAMES THOMSON appear to us the most complacent expressions of the after-dinner mood....

.... We might say with the greatest truth that the lot of Midas of the golden touch, of CÆSAR who bestrode half the world, of all those whose fortune has made them the envy of centuries, will be but miserable squalor beside the happy fate of the competitors who are successful in this competition. They will have all the advantages of their prototypes without any of their anxieties, and without having to give up any present occupation in which they....

THE GIFT OF THE GAB.

WERE I offer'd whate'er I might wish
By the queen of the fairies, Queen MAE,
I would ask no one's head in a dish—
I would ask for the gift of the gab.

To the modest, the meek, the morose,
The hues of the world turn to drab;
But life is all *couleur de rose*,
If you have but the gift of the gab.

Silent ROBINSON pays third-class fare:
Bolder BROWN now and then takes a
cab:

But SMITH drives his carriage and pair—
For SMITH has the gift of the gab.

In the use of his tongue and his pen
An Oxonian beats a Cantab;
And by this ye may know Oxford men:
One and all have the gift of the gab.

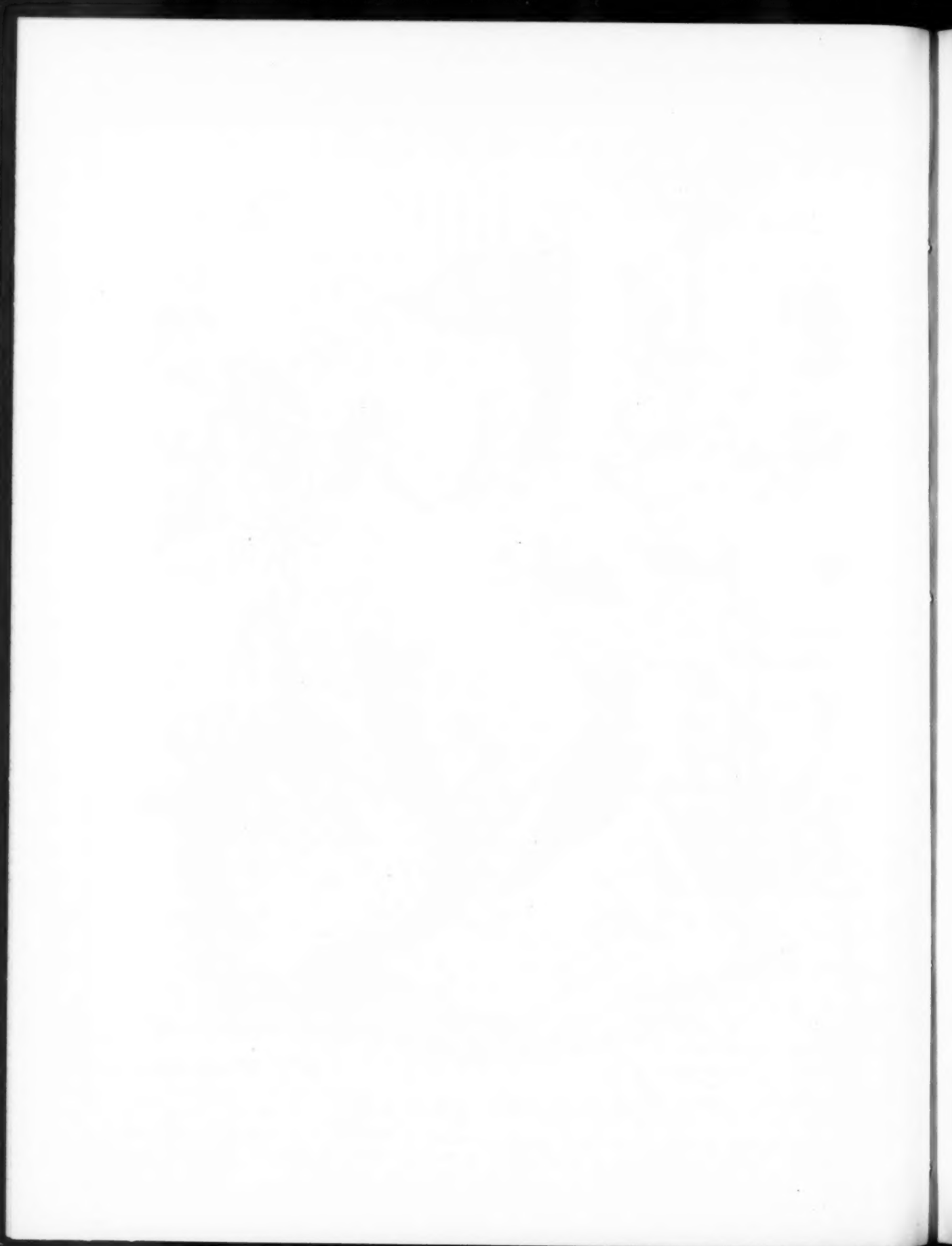
The Empire of Britain, 'tis said,
Has been won by a habit of "grab":
But for painting a hemisphere red,
Recommend me the gift of the gab.

Now when you've perused the above,
You may think me at rhyming a dab:
But I'm bless'd if for money or love
I can purchase the gift of the gab.



PAINFULLY REDUCED.

POOR OLD MR. CONSOLS. "NOBODY SEEMS TO KNOW WHAT'S THE MATTER. I'M VERY DEPRESSED. I DO FEEL SUCH A SINKING. I'M AFRAID THEY'RE LOSING INTEREST IN ME. I DON'T KNOW WHEN I'VE FELT SO LOW AS I DID LAST WEEK."





(With grateful acknowledgments to Mr. John Hassall's Picture Post-card.)

"ENDINGS LTD."

It has often been noticed by us, that many young writers find a difficulty in fixing a fitting conclusion to their works. As this is a matter of some importance, since in fiction everything depends upon the last word, we have decided to come to the assistance of the youthful novelist by stocking a large and varied selection of endings formed upon the best possible models. The fit is in each instance guaranteed. In ordering, simply state number of pattern required, and goods will be forwarded ready for immediate attachment. Samples below:

No. 4638. *The Sentimentally-Sensational.*

"Years have come and gone since then, and Sir JASPER and his wife are verging upon middle age. Despite, however, the silver threads among the gold, MIRIAM retains much of her old beauty, and in her husband's eyes at least is as fair as ever. Old JOHN, a little feebler than when we knew him, is still an inmate of the Grange, and the inseparable companion of his mistress. And, every year, as the fifteenth of December comes round, Sir JASPER calls the old man into his presence, and while MIRIAM's cheeks grow pale with recollected terror the two men pledge a bumper to the memory of that wild night spent in 'The Cave of Death'"—(or wherever it happens to be, preferably the title of the book).

No. 7709. *The Vaguely-Vacuous.*

"And now, at last, now that you have heard this true story of the loves of PAUL and PAULINA, tell me, if you can,

whether or not their ending was a sad one, or whether indeed any end to such a story were a cause of thanksgiving. For who may say whether, if it had been

otherwise, it would have been so, or if not, why not for anything at all. For is not this in a way the real ending, or, rather, only the beginning of the end?"

The above is highly recommended, since it will go with almost any class of story, and can be made to mean anything (or nothing), according to the taste and fancy of the reader.

Somewhat similar is the following, for which we have had many inquiries lately:—

No. 46203. *The Insolubly Indeterminate.*

"She was very calm now; only the whites of her eyes (as she caught the reflection of them in a mirror) seemed strangely pale. It was time. She heard the sharp step of the postman, and the dull click of a letter falling. Slowly, almost mechanically, she opened the box. In that one moment her whole life was to be decided: either he had written, or it was a reminder from the gas company. Then she drew forth the letter—which?"

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IN THE SHEFFIELD MUSEUM.

Distinguished Visitor. "FREE TRADE. DEAR ME! OF COURSE, I REMEMBER PERFECTLY. HOW VERY INTERESTING! QUITE HISTORICAL!"

LOST MASTERPIECES.

(Mr. Punch's own Collection.)

It is one of the weak points about collecting unpublished masterpieces that the value of even the choicest specimens fluctuates alarmingly. For example, we will suppose that KEATS is at the moment the poet most acclaimed by the critics. Then even the smallest fragment of KEATS'S work will arouse the keenest attention and, if put up at CHRISTIE'S, will command a fancy price. Ten years later KEATS may be temporarily out of vogue. The fragment will then be comparatively valueless. The work of THOMAS MOORE, for instance, is just now quite out of fashion. Perhaps he is too sentimental for the present age. Whatever be the reason, the discovery of a new lyric by him possesses at the moment merely an archaeological interest. And yet fifty years ago the following touching "Irish Melody" would have brought delight to thousands, and been sung in half the drawing-rooms in the country:—

OH, ASK ME NO MORE!

Oh, ask me no more for the cause of my sadness,
Nor seek to discover the grief that I feel,
Enough that this breast hath no room now for gladness,
Enough that its wounds thou art pow'rless to heal!

As the bright sun at noonday by clouds may be hidden,
This heart is oppress'd by the waters of grief,
Oh, let not its weakness too rashly be chidden!
Oh, check not the tear that alone brings relief!

There is never in Erin a sea-breeze that ruffles,
And never a cloud that o'ershadows her skies,
But her poet in anguish convulsively snuffles
While floods of emotion gush forth from his eyes!

But if MOORE is no longer in fashion there has been of late, at least among the critical, something of a boom in CRABBE; and the following beautiful lines will win a host of admirers:—

Behold how Nature doth exert her might
To keep mankind upon the path of Right.
While on the contrary observe how strong
Her efforts to repress him when he's wrong.
Each petty fault she visits with her wrath
And makes him strictly follow virtue's path.
The Highest Good she ever keeps in view,
But Moderation she enforces too.
The slothful man to energy is spurr'd
By the example of the early bird,
While the too early worm's untimely fate
Shows the advantages of being late.
Thus all her lessons are beneficent
If only we are certain what is meant,
And the whole world, correctly understood,
Gives every satisfaction to the Good.

Mr. Punch's collection also includes about a hundred yards of a narrative poem by Sir WALTER SCOTT. The following characteristic excerpt is, unhappily, all he can find space for:—

METAVISH gazed along the lake
As if a last farewell to take.
He watched the fair moon shed her light
Refulgent on Ben Lomond's height,
And now Loch Katrine's waters gleam
Beneath her chaste and silvery beam.
Around his foot the heather springs,
The bracken too and other things,
A river's murmur fills the air—
The usual stag is drinking there—
And never, stranger, hath it been
Thy lot to view so fair a scene!

PHIL MAY'S PICTURES.

DURING the coming weeks all the world and his wife will be flocking to the Leicester Galleries in Leicester Square to bid good-bye (alas! that it should be so!) to the prince of graphic humorists, our own PHIL MAY. It will be the last chance of seeing a truly representative gathering of that strong and tender work which has charmed us all—sometimes to tears as well as laughter. Here in their spacious new galleries (which enter at the junction of Leicester Square and Green Street, where, Mr. Punch notes, lived both HOGARTH and REYNOLDS), Messrs. BROWN AND PHILLIPS have collected not only the drawings which we have all seen, but others which are new (a fine set of political character portraits among these last), and many brilliant studies, the foundations of that patient and dexterous work of which the printed picture gave only the essence. Here, with many early drawings, are those last things done in the dark days of sickness, and yet worthy to be favourably compared with the best.

And here, finally, the visitor will have a rare opportunity—certainly the last—of becoming the possessor of a sketch or a study as it left the hand of the master. Even the most thrifty may do this with an easy conscience, for the collector is already on the track, and a pen-and-ink picture by PHIL MAY is a rising investment, soon to become priceless, for the hand that traced it is at rest.

G. R. H.

P. I. P.

(Perfectly Impossible Pulp.)

A CHAT ABOUT THE CLOCK TOWER.

MANY of our readers have doubtless noticed that something unusual is going on at the Clock Tower, Westminster. Some 300 feet up from the ground, tiny figures, resembling flies in white jackets, can be seen threading their way in and out of a bristling forest of scaffolding which surmounts the familiar face of Big Ben. On closer inspection these figures resolve themselves into painters, and they are painting the roof with paint!

To most people it is no doubt a mystery how the scaffolding was ever got up to such a height. I am informed by the contractors that it was hoisted from the ground bit by bit, and each piece of timber was then fixed in its allotted place, care being taken that no two pieces should be fixed in the same place at the same time.

Naturally the painters are all picked men. Confirmed drunkards, passive resisters, and men with only one leg were rejected at once by His Majesty's Office of Works; so also were blind men and men who had no knowledge of painting.

Great care of course has to be exercised in working at such a height, and although it was found that the quickest way to reach the ground was simply to drop from the scaffold, the men seem to prefer the more conventional method of descending.

The timber for this huge scaffolding is all made of wood, and originally grew in the form of trees.

On a clear day, a magnificent panorama can be enjoyed from the top of the scaffolding, and many unusual views of some of London's famous landmarks can be obtained.

The roof of the Houses of Parliament can be distinctly seen by the keen-eyed observer, who will also notice the river Thames winding its sinuous way to ocean. On a foggy day, however, little can be seen save fog.

In conclusion I may state, on the authority of one of the painters, that the boom of Big Ben when he strikes noon can be distinctly heard by the men, to whom it is a signal that the welcome hour of the midday meal has arrived once more.

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS.

XXV.—THE COMING PLACE.

I CAN'T say I'm exactly prepossessed with the place so far, but then I suppose anywhere the road from the railway station is not everything that can be desired. Besides, I have the assurance of the young lady with the adhesive fringe, who served me with thin tea in a thick cup in the Junction Refreshment Room, that Newtown-on-Sea is the coming place. Encouraged by this I hold on tighter to my hat, and make my way forward between parallel wire fences, enjoying an uninterrupted prospect of patchy grass and initiatory building operations.

In course of time the wire fences give place to rows of new shops, each flying its name triumphantly in the gale in white letters on a red flag. I catch a glimpse of the sea at the further end and press on, mentally recapitulating the instructions given me by my sister as she started me on this reconnoitring expedition.

"A pretty place you know, with no niggers or anything of that sort but not a dead and alive place for Heaven's sake and a pier only not one of those horrid long ones and bracing but not a windy place because we don't want to have our heads blown off either and there positively must be some good shops and something rather quaint you know with fishing nets and all that and a decent theatre and you know the sort of place I mean."

With these requirements in mind I reach the end of the High Street, and am suddenly blown on to the front.

I gaze on the scene with emotion. Before me for the whole length of the front lie the beach gardens, luxuriant with undersized shrubs, asphalt paths, and openwork iron. To the north the prospect ends abruptly with a huge building of surpassing modernity; to the south a long low coast line, sparsely dotted with red-brick villas, extends into the distance. The road that separates the gardens from the beach is up, disclosing a huge drain-pipe to the view, so that the holiday seeker who would reach the beach has to thread his way through scattered rubble and gangs of workmen. Jutting out into an angry sea, which plainly resents its intrusion, is the unfinished framework of a long iron pier. But such things as these, I take it, are inseparable from a coming place. For the rest, Newtown-on-Sea is as pleasing to the eye as asphalt paths, ornamental wooden fencing, and festooned iron spikes can make it.—I think I should like a little brandy.

I make my way to the huge modern building that I have already observed at the north end of the front only to

find—I give the information for what it is worth—that it is a Home for the Blind. With an effort I overtake a stout man who is chasing a billycock hat, and by him am directed to the Hotel Ozone.

On the way I suddenly bethink me of my sister, and turning up the High Street, manage to make discovery of a post-office cunningly concealed inside a grocer's shop. Here I write out a telegram in which (being of an economical turn) I content myself with deploring the gale and expressing dissatisfaction with the drapers' shops in a few pithy words, which the young lady behind the cage bars counts with hardly suppressed indignation—an indignation which becomes altogether too much for her on my venturing mildly to inquire for the time of the next train back to London. However, an accommodating man in an ear-flap cap comes to my rescue, and I learn that the next train leaves for London in twenty minutes.

Hurrying off to the Hotel Ozone I enter the bar and order a brandy-and-soda and a sandwich. I am served by a good-humoured man with a red face who, after inquiring cheerfully if I have been having a bit of a blow (to which I answer emphatically in the affirmative), resumes conversation with an aggressively prosperous-looking man in the corner.

"Picturesque, I grant yer," he observes.

"It's the picturesquest place on the coast," affirms the prosperous man with conviction.

"Picturesqueness ain't everything," says the barman. "I grant yer it's picturesque. But it's a bit slow fer me."

"Select," enunciates the other emphatically.

"Select, of course," assents the barman. "Of course I'm new 'ere, an' no doubt the place strikes a bit strange, but I've a sorter feelin' I wanten get inter somethin'."

The prosperous man apparently has no sympathy for these vague yearnings on the part of the barman.

"Select," he repeats with unction. "What d'you want?—Niggers, I suppose."

"I won't go so far as that," cedes the barman apologetically.

"I should think not," says the other. "We mean to keep Newtown select; that's what we mean to keep it. It's the coming place. Look at the air."

"Splendid air," assents the barman, trying to retrieve his reputation. The prosperous man goes so far as to appeal to me on the subject of the air, and I admit that I have never known anything like it.

"Look at the pier," he says, filling

his pipe. "It's going to be half a mile long."

"So I 'ear say," admits the barman.

"Look at the gardens," continues the other; "just look at the way those gardens have been laid out."

"The gardens affronting the sea, you mean?" remarks the barman (rather felicitously, I think). "Yes, they're picturesque, I will grant."

"It's the coming place," says the prosperous man, and strikes a match with finality.

Mindful of my train I take advantage of the pause to make my departure. The prosperous man stops in the act of lighting his pipe to address me.

"Staying in Newtown long, Sir?" he inquires.

"Well—er—no, I'm just going back to town," I admit from the door.

"Oh!—Been here long?"

I am in for it now.

"Three-quarters of an hour," I answer.

The prosperous man loses none of his pomposity.

"Oh, well, never mind, never mind. You've seen enough of the place to judge."

"Quite," I assure him.

"And having seen Newtown-on-Sea," he continues, with one triumphant eye on the barman, "can you think of any improvement in it?"

The prosperous man's corner is the one furthest from the door, which I have already opened.

"A slight change," I suggest, "in the preposition," and leaving him to digest the remark, beat a hurried retreat towards the railway station.

A PUZZLER.

This is from the *Pembrokeshire Herald* of September 25:

WANTED AN ELDERLY MAN to live in, able to manage a Pony, Trap and Garden. State wages required, &c.

It is to be feared that the advertiser will have to wait some considerable time ere he finds the sort of Elderly Man who will exactly suit these strangely exceptional requirements.

CORRECTION (as to last week's "Short Vacation Ramble").—The Tame Poet, calling himself "THOMAS TOUQUÉ DU TOUQUET," writes to me from his home in the Forest and says, "I never composed such a line as 'À l'hiver de la mois de Mai.' *Jamais de la vie!* Why try to ruin my reputation? I shall lose my post; and I shall lose this post if I don't hurry up before it leaves. Of course 'en hiver au mois de Mai.' And can't you scan? No matter, you shall scan my features soon when you again meet yours forgivingly, "THOMAS."

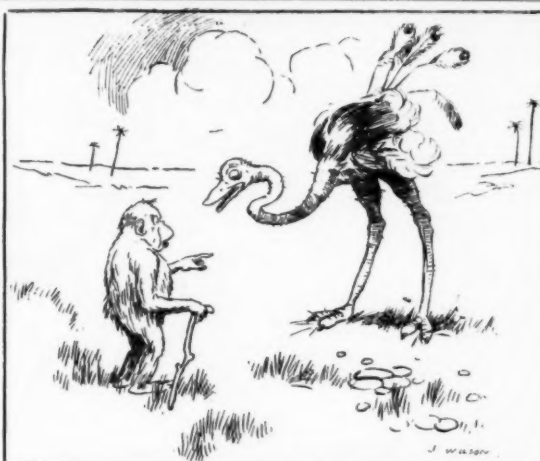
THE MELO-FARCICAL FLOOD-TIDE.

WHAT is a "melo-farce?" Mr. Melo-farcical CECIL RALEIGH replies, "My piece entitled *The Flood Tide*, now being played at Drury Lane, is a specimen of what I understand by 'melo-farce.'" Admitted. But, as there is a flood in it which washes away a house and swamps the plains, just such an one as, in fact, you may read of in *The Master Purpose* by HAROLD BINDLOSS (to which incident, by the way, it does not appear that Mr. RALEIGH is indebted), would it not have been more in character with the farcical nature of the play had he called it *The Flood Loosed*? Then the melo-farcical author might have dropped in a quite up-to-date jest appropriate to "the Tide House," as a jocular description of the building at Blackmere which the Lunatic-at-Large, cleverly rendered by Mr. SOMERSET, patronises, where he is followed by *George Wellington Clipp*, a character portrayed by Mr. WEEDON GROSSMITH with dry humour, so as to be artistically contrasted with the spirit-sodden *MacNaughton*. To this lonely spot comes also one *Menotti*, a reckless desperado, with precious little to say for himself, played for all it is worth by Mr. N. McKINNEL, intending to kill the Lunatic, who, however, proving one too many for him, knocks him on the head, giving him heel-taps with a heavy pair of boots, which action, as he has always been carrying these boots about with him throughout the piece up till now, shows that these properties were not introduced for a mere bootless errand. But that the author of *Bombastes* had nearly a hundred years ago forestalled him, the ruffianly Italian, when threatened by the lunatic, might have exclaimed, "I'll make thy threats as bootless as thyself!" Of course such familiar pleasantries as these belong naturally to a "melo-farce."

This letting loose of the flood is the only really "sensational" effect in this drama, which, as a matter of fact, has in it nothing more farcical than is ordinarily to be found in every good melodrama of the Drury Lane or old Adelphi type. Mr. COLLINS has given us an admirably contrived effect, or series of effects, in the rising of the waters (or "rice-ing" of the waters, for isn't that how it's done?), in the yielding of the sluices, and the sudden sinking of the wooden chalet in the deluge. The dams burst: and the biggest of them is, it may be supposed, uttered by the wicked villain who perishes in his murderous attempt. Disclaiming any intention of throwing cold water on this "situation," it may occur to not a few to ask, is not this well contrived "sensation" somewhat thrown away on three men, about not one of whom do any of us care a single rap? Is it not a waste of water? "Oh!" moans Mr. Weller, Senior, "vy worn't there a alleybi?" And we say to Mr. RALEIGH, "Why worn't there a female in distress as the persecuted heroine in this scene?" This is what is lacking; even "melo-farce" cannot get along successfully without our sympathies being enlisted for the virtuous, ill-treated, cruelly persecuted heroine who, with her lover, triumphs before the final fall of the curtain.

Years ago Mr. WATTS PHILLIPS tried to mix up burlesque, farce and drama in a concoction written for the eccentric EDWARD SOTHERN in a piece called *The Woman in Mauve*. It did not "catch on," and to revive such an attempt, especially at Drury Lane, where everything, including the audience, must be taken seriously, is surely not what experience would suggest nor wisdom counsel. There is nothing melo-farcical about the too realistic "ragging" scene, which, as being unessential to the plot, might, even now, be omitted.

That certain plausible, superficially honest, and more or less sporting or comic individuals as are the members of the *Champion* family, represented by Miss CLAIRE ROMAINE as the impulsive *Polly*, by J. H. BARNES as her really



QUEER CUSTOMERS.

The Monkey. "WHAT ON EARTH HAVE YOU STUCK THOSE FEATHERS IN YOUR TAIL FOR?"

Ostrich. "HUSH! I'M TRAVELLING INCOGNITO. I WANT TO BE MISTAKEN FOR A PEACOCK."

secondarily but genial and affectionate father, and by Mr. ROBERT MINSTER, as rather uppish *Captain Jack Champion, V.C.*, should (the Captain excepted) "do evil that good may come of it," is a state of affairs that can never be popular with the patrons of the drama; and yet the gods, treating this as an exceptional case, take kindly to all the well-intentioned evil-doers, and cheer them heartily when recalled before the curtain, extending their charitable consideration to graceful Miss MARGARET HALSTAN as *Marie Pitchioli*, as being the victim of her unprincipled mamma, *Baroness Pitchioli*, in which last-named character Mrs. BEERBOHM TREE (acting presumably under "melo-farcical" orders from the author) so breaks her English, without giving any Italian, as to render her speech rather less intelligible than if she had been representing a lady from Fiji speaking her own charming vernacular. "I do not know your beautiful language, but I admire him," as Mr. HERBERT, the celebrated artist, observed in an effort to interpret clearly to a French Academician his own particular meaning. And this in effect is what an artistically gratified, but considerably puzzled, audience say to Mrs. TREE in acknowledging her clever rendering of this "broken melody."

As the uninteresting villain (of sorts), named the *Earl of Sutton*, first cousin to the *Marquis of Mitcham*, Mr. JOHN TRESAHAR is far better than the part, while Mr. DAVY BURNABY well seconds his superior as *Roderick O'Grieff*, and indeed stands out from among his fellow-officers, who are at present somewhat deficient in military bearing; but they have, it may be, only recently joined, and after a month's drill they will be as fine and soldierlike a set as may be found in any theatrical corps in London.

For the Saloon Deck, the Interior of the *Hôtel Métropole*, Brighton, the Paddock, Kempton Park, and the L. C. & D. Terminus at the time of the starting of the "Boat Train," which are all marvels of scene-painting and mechanism, Messrs. R. CANEY and BRUCE SMITH may claim "honours divided;" while Mr. JAMES GLOVER is to be congratulated on the incidental music that aptly illustrates the situations with a quietly humorous recognition of the general "melo-farcical" idea. His *entr'acte* situations, as "refreshment bars," are always welcome to a parched-with-excitement audience. May this piece be "the tide that, taken at its flood, leads on to fortune." *Soit.*

RHYMES OF THE EAST.

A SOMBRE RETROSPECT.

LONG, long ago, in that heroic time
When I, a coy and modest youth, was
shot
Out on this dust-head of careers and
crime
To try and learn what 's what,

I had a servitor, a dusky knave
Who showed an almost irreligious
taste
For wearing nothing but a turban, save
A kerchief round his waist.

This apparition gave me such a start
That I endowed him with a cast-off
pair
Of inexpressibles, and said, "Depart,
And be no longer bare."

He took the offering with broken thanks;
But day succeeded day, and still
revealed
Those sombre and attenuated shanks
Intensely unconcealed;

Until at last the climax came when I
Resolved to bring this matter to an
end,
And when I saw him passing, shouted,
"Hi!
Where are your trousers, friend?"

Halting, he gave a deferential bow;
Then, to my horror, beamingly replied,
"Master not see? I wearing trousers
now!"

I would have said he lied,
But could not. As I shaped the glowing
phrase,
I looked upon his turban—looked
again—
Mine own familiar pattern met my gaze,
And all the truth was plain!

Th' ingenious creature, Eastern to the
core,
Holding my gift in superstitious
dread,
Had made a turban out of it, and wore
His trousers—on his head!

DUM-DUM.

FOOD TO MAKE GIANTS.

[“Dr. HATAI, Professor of Neurology in Chicago University, claims to have discovered a wonderful food substance called Lecithin, capable of transforming men into giants.”—*Daily Mail*.]

As the result of careful inquiry *Mr. Punch* is enabled to announce that Lecithin has been on the English market for six months, and that numerous testimonials to its efficacy have already been received.

An Editor writes: “I took one bottle of Lecithin, and my circulation greatly improved. By the time I had finished my third bottle I was five times as large



A PROGRESSIVE.

Teacher. "NOW THEN, WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COMPOSITION?"

Little Girl (eagerly). "PLEASE, MISS, COMPOSITION IS THE ART OF BRINGING SIMPLE IDEAS INTO COMPLICATION."

as the editor of any London penny morning paper."

A distinguished novelist (who whilst desiring to advertise the virtues of Lecithin does not wish to advertise himself) writes: "I have only taken half a bottle of Lecithin, but it is already evident that I shall have to enlarge my island."

Mr. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, in his latest fiscal leaflet, says: "No more striking proof is needed of the hold which American Trusts are gaining on the British Market than the fact that it is impossible to make Big Englanders without using Lecithin."

"Only alternate doses of Lecithin and London's Best," writes the Editor of the *Daily News*, "are needed to change the working man of the present day from an idle, gambling, drunken scoundrel into a Large Loafer."

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT says: "I took one dose of your abominable mixture, and to my utter disgust found myself a High Churchman."

The President of the Local Government Board writes humorously, "Since the days of King ALFRED the name of LONG has been famous in Wiltshire (though never more famous than to-day), but one dose of your medicine has made me Longer. My audiences sometimes grew a little impatient when I was LONG. What will they do now I am Longer?"

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, in explaining his resignation to a constituent, writes: "I very much regret having to abandon the great political principle which has hitherto been the guiding star of my career—'Always stick to office'—but I have been taking Lecithin, and three doses made me far too large for any office."

Mr. BRODRICK writes: "Your medicine is if anything too good. I ordered it to be administered to all the 'Brodricks' (as ignorant journalists term under-sized recruits). It worked like magic, but unfortunately seventeen thousand men of the First Army Corps are confined to barracks because they are unable to get into their regulation uniforms. A War Office Committee is now sitting to consider whether larger uniforms should be provided at the men's expense."

Mr. ALGERNON ASHTON remarks, in the course of a lengthy letter, "Some years since, in anticipation of the day when my letters to editors will come through the Dead Letter Office, I purchased for my own use and enjoyment a commodious vault. Unfortunately a friend induced me to try Lecithin, and now, to my utter dismay, I find myself too big for my vault. If Dr. HATAI has any occasion for a handsome brick vault I can let him have one at a very considerable reduction."

A Member of Parliament, who modestly conceals his identity, sends the following testimonial:—"For some time I have suffered from Chronic Hydrocephalus (Inflation of the Head), which made me unpleasantly conspicuous. One dose of your excellent medicine made my body swell proportionately. With the aid of Lecithin I have no doubt that I shall be able to reach to the top of the poll at the next Oldham Election."

"Formerly," says Dr. CLIFFORD, "I was five feet six inches in height, and could only speak for a bare three hours. Now, thanks to Lecithin, I need no platform to stand on, and can out-shout three auctioneers, a brass band, and a division of constabulary for six hours on end."